

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
Montrose, Colorado, CO 150

DOCUMENTATION OF LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE AND NEPA ADEQUACY

NUMBER: CO-150-2006-040 DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: Coal Exploration License COC70127

PROJECT NAME: Bowie Resources, LLC (BRL) – IPG exploration license – Exploration at a single drill hole site.

PLANNING UNIT: Uncompahgre Field Office

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Within T.12S., R.91W., 6th Principal Meridian, in portions of Sections 27, 28, 33, & 34 on surface managed by the U.S. Forest Service between Dove Gulch and Iron Point Gulch, Delta County, Colorado

APPLICANT: J. E. Stover & Associates, Inc., on behalf of BRL

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional): None

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is to drill one hole to explore the upper and lower Bowie coal seams to determine the thickness and quality, specifically that of the B-Seam. The hole would be drilled to the Rollins Sandstone allowing for the complete B-Seam data collection.

The location proposed is the same one proposed in previous coal exploration plans, but was never utilized. The surface is managed by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre National Forest (GMUG) and the coal is managed by the Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management Uncompahgre Field Office (BLM-UFO). BRL would like to have the option to conduct exploration drilling in October 2006.

The proposed surface disturbance includes approximately 0.62 miles of temporary access road and a 2 – 3 acre drill pad. The GMUG Paonia District Ranger has provided a letter to the BLM-UFO manager dated July 21, 2006, providing their *Conditions for Use and Protection of Non-mineral Resources*. BRL will be required to comply with the Forest Service conditions.

Reclamation will occur as described in the Coal Exploration License COC70127.

LAND USE PLAN (LUP) CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The proposed action is subject to the following plan:

Name of Plan: Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan/ROD

Date Approved: September 1988/July 1989

X The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Decision Language: The Uncompahgre Basin Record of Decision contains the following decision in the area of the proposed action. Mgt. Unit 7 (page 21) – Coal Management - The coal management direction will be managed for both existing and potential coal development. Development of existing coal leases will continue.

_____ The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

REVIEW OF EXISTING NEPA DOCUMENTS:

List by name and date all existing NEPA documents that cover the Proposed Action.

Name of Document: U.S. Forest Service EA

Date Approved: October 24, 2001

NEPA ADEQUACY CRITERIA:

1. Is the Proposed Action substantially the same action and at the site specifically analyzed in an existing document?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Completing the drilling set forth in an exploration plan that was part of an existing license is the same action. The surface managing agency was provided specifics regarding the site, and have provided their consent to allow drilling activities at the specific site.

2. Was a reasonable range of alternatives to the Proposed Action analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s), and does that range and analysis appropriately consider current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

The range of alternatives is adequate for the proposed action and current environmental concerns, interests and resource values. The alternatives analyzed in the 2001 EA were the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives. In our judgment, current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values are adequately addressed.

3. Does the information or circumstances upon which the existing NEPA document(s) are based remain valid and germane to the Proposed Action? Is the analysis still valid in light of new studies or resource assessment information?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

There are no new circumstances or information that would add to the decision. Exploring for the coal would not adversely impact maintaining or achieving public land health. The Landscape Health Assessment for this area (North Fork LHA) is expected to be completed in 2007.

4. Does the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the Proposed Action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

The methodology and analytical approach used in the NEPA documents listed above is appropriate for the current proposed action.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Action unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

The existing NEPA document sufficiently analyzes impacts related to the current proposed action.

6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the Proposed Action unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

The cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the Proposed Action will remain unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA documents.

7. Is the public involvement and interagency review associated with the existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the Proposed Action?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Adequate public involvement and interagency reviews were held when the existing NEPA documents were written.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: Identify those team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis and preparation of this work sheet (by name and title).

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Review Completed</u>
Desty Dyer	Mining Engineer	Minerals
Lynn Lewis	Geologist	Minerals
GMUG Paonia District Staff	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife
GMUG Paonia District Staff	Archeologist	Cultural
Ryan Taylor	Geologist (GMUG)	Surface Protection

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: Cultural surveys were completed for the proposed action and archaeological clearance has been obtained for the proposed IPG CEL with FS conditions (project file). The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has given concurrence that no historic properties will be affected. Due to the attached FS conditions and the completed cultural survey, there are no environmental consequences associated with these resources.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Analysis of water depletions for endangered fish were adequately covered in the October 2001 U.S. Forest Service EA, and water use under this proposal would not exceed that for which a depletion payment was made under the existing NEPA documents. Proposed activities carried out consistent with FS conditions would result in no impact to endangered, threatened, or candidate species.

MITIGATION: Same as for U.S. Forest Service EA of October 2001:

The exploration shall be subject to the terms, conditions and stipulations of Coal Exploration License COC70127, and the Forest Service *Conditions for Use and Protection of Non-mineral Resources*.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional): Compliance inspections are preformed semi-annually as part of the Inspection and Enforcement Plan of the BLM Uncompahgre Field Office.

NAME OF PREPARER: Desty Dyer

DATE: 08/01/2006

CONCLUSION

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- ☒ Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the land use plan and that the NEPA documentation previously prepared fully covers the Proposed Action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.
- ☐ Based on the review documented above, I conclude that either the proposal does not conform with the land use plan, or that additional NEPA analysis is needed.

SIGNATURE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

/s/ Barbara L. Sharrow

Uncompahgre Field Office, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 8/3/06

Note: The signed Conclusion on this worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.